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REMARKS

Claims 8-15 have been canceled. Claims 1-7 remain pending in the application.

Applicants, again, respectfully request that the Examiner acknowledge receipt of all certified copies of the priority documents for this application.

Claims 1-5 and 7 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 3,750,022 to Curry et al. in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,987,069 to Furukawa et al.; and claim 6 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Curry et al. in view of Furukawa et al., and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,385,773 to Schwartzman et al. Applicants respectfully traverse the rejections.

The Examiner maintained the rejections by citing the description of a phantom subscriber 101, illustrated in Fig. 6 of Curry et al., separating downclocks for command timing as alleged disclosure of the claimed feature of inserting a tone signal into the downward signals. The Examiner further contended that the timing waveform "causes opening or closing of switches for either un-attenuated or attenuate to a desired level before amplification." Page 3, lines 2-4 of the Office Action. The Examiner, thus, apparently contended that the timing waveform discloses the claimed feature of a noise-control device responding to a tone signal.

Such portions of Curry et al. only describe, however, downclocks for command timing. In other words, such timing waveform is merely a clock reference for responding to commands when the phantom subscriber 101 is being addressed by LPC 16. Col. 11, lines 20-35 of Curry et al. Thus, the cited portions of Curry et al. merely include description of the phantom subscriber 101 separating out downclocks for generating internal timing to affect switchable attenuators 128 and switching circuit 103. The timing waveform is not generated to indicate noise increase

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detected by the phantom subscriber 101, nor is it inserted by phantom subscriber 101 into downward signals transmitted between LPC 16 and STs, where a device provided at STs responds to it. As shown in Fig. 1 of Curry et al., LPC 16 resides in headend site 13.

Applicants, therefore, respectfully submit that Curry et al. do not disclose or suggest the claimed features for which the Examiner relied upon it in the claim rejections.

Again, Furukawa et al. describe a technique for allocating upstream and downstream portions of a frequency spectrum based on line conditions, such as noise and interference, using a bidirectional transceiver. As such, Furukawa et al. would not cure the above-described deficiencies of Curry et al. even assuming, *arguendo*, that it would have been obvious at the time the claimed invention was made to combine these references.

In other words, Curry et al. and Furukawa et al., as applied by the Examiner, fail to disclose or suggest ,

“[a] system for reducing noise in a signal line, through which upward signals and downward signals are transmitted between a center and terminals, comprising:
a noise-reduction device, provided between the center and the terminals, which detects a noise increase regarding the upward signals on the signal line spontaneously without a noise measurement command from the center to generate a control signal indicative of the noise increase, and is directly triggered by said control signal to insert a tone signal into the downward signals and to attenuate the upward signals by an increased amount without transmitting the control signal to the center; and
a noise-control device, provided at the terminals, which responds to the tone signal sent from the noise-reduction device by boosting a transmission level of the upward signals by an amount compensating for the attenuation of the upward signals by said noise-reduction device,” as recited in amended claim 1.
(Emphasis added)

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 1, together with claims 2-5 and 7 dependent therefrom, is patentable over Curry et al. and Furukawa et al., separately and in

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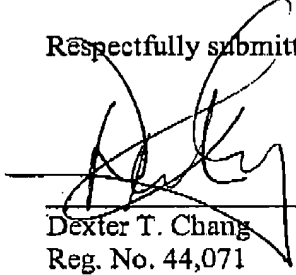
combination, for at least the above-stated reasons. The Examiner relied upon Schwartzman et al. as a combining reference to specifically address the additional features recited in dependent claim 6. Therefore, the additional combination of Schwartzman et al. would still have failed to overcome the above-described deficiencies of Curry et al. and Furukawa et al. with respect to base claim 1. For at least this reason, claim 6 is patentable over the cited references.

Applicants appreciate the Examiner's implicit finding that the additional references made of record, but not applied, do not render the claims of the present application unpatentable, whether these references are considered alone or in combination with others.

In view of the remarks set forth above, this application is in condition for allowance which action is respectfully requested. However, if for any reason the Examiner should consider this application not to be in condition for allowance, the Examiner is respectfully requested to telephone the undersigned attorney at the number listed below prior to issuing a further Action.

Any fee due with this paper may be charged to Deposit Account No. 50-1290.

Respectfully submitted,



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DTC:bf

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